

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
STATE PERSONNEL BOARD  
STATEWIDE DISABILITY  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

# A Guide To EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES for EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES



Prepared by the  
**Emergency  
Response  
Task Force**  
Sacramento,  
California  
January 1999



**This publication will  
be made available  
in Braille,  
large print,  
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Please direct requests for  
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Statewide Disability Advisory Council  
State Personnel Board  
Civil Rights Programs Unit  
801 Capitol Mall  
Sacramento, CA 95814**

**(916) 653-1579 (voice)  
(916) 654-2360 (TTY)**

**DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY PATROL**

2555 First Avenue  
Sacramento, California 95818-2696  
(916) 657-7261  
(800) 735-2929 (TT/TDD)  
(800) 735-2922 (Voice)



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The California Highway Patrol (CHP) is committed to providing equal levels of service to all state employees, including employees with disabilities. Additionally, in accordance with California Government Code Section 14685, the CHP is responsible for the protection of state employees and property.

The Statewide Disability Advisory Council Emergency Response Task Force in conjunction with the CHP developed A Guide to Emergency Evacuation Procedures for Employees with Disabilities. The guide contains in-depth information pertaining to emergency situations and evacuation procedures in general. You will find this guide is a valuable resource to assist with preparing emergency evacuation plans that address the potential needs of all employees.

Should you have any questions, or to request additional information regarding emergency preparedness and/or crime prevention, forward a written request to the CHP, Field Services Section, Safety Services Unit, P.O. Box 942898, Sacramento, CA 95814, or telephone (916) 323-1483.

Sincerely,  
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. O. Helmick".





















D. O. HELMICK  
Commissioner

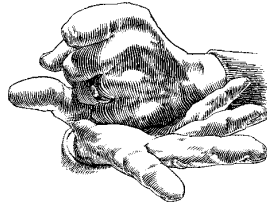


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# HELP

(American Sign Language)



# EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASK FORCE

## History

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires public agencies to review their emergency plans for the inclusion of people with disabilities as part of their Self-Evaluation. The deadline for completing the Self-Evaluation was January 1995.

On November 6, 1996, a panel presentation was made to the State Personnel Board's Statewide Disability Advisory Council (SDAC) regarding the lack of emergency evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities in State buildings. The panelists were MaryAnn Deibel, Employment Development Department, Les Treece-Sinclair, Department of Rehabilitation, and Charlene MacKenzie, Caltrans. While reviewing departments' emergency plans, the panel found most plans did not adequately address the needs of people with disabilities. As a result of the panel's findings, SDAC unanimously passed a motion to establish a task force. The task force was charged with developing a report designed to assist State departments with appropriately and effectively addressing the emergency and evacuation needs of individuals with disabilities.

The Emergency Response Task Force (ERTF) held its first meeting in early January 1997. An outline of the contents of the document and a process was developed. Then, the individual Task Force members researched and wrote the various sections. A complete draft was finished by the end of 1997. It was sent to all SDAC members with a request that they distribute it within their departments for review and comments. Walter Vaughn, the Executive Officer of the State Personnel Board, sent copies of the draft to the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Highway Patrol, the Department of Rehabilitation and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (specifically, the State Fire Marshall's Office) asking for their review and comments. All comments were compiled, and a revised draft was presented to the SDAC at the August 5, 1998 meeting where the SDAC officially adopted it.

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASK FORCE

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# EMERGENCY RESPONSE TASK FORCE

## ***Relationship to the CHP Model Emergency Plan***

The California Highway Patrol (CHP) has developed a basic Model Emergency Plan (HPH 100.3) which is intended to provide a consistent format for State agencies to use in the preparation of their own emergency plans. While it is very comprehensive, it does not fully address emergency response issues regarding people with disabilities.

The explicit inclusion of people with disabilities in emergency plans is relatively new and challenging. Because the range of issues to be considered is extensive, this task may even appear overwhelming. This publication has been designed as a supplement to the CHP Model Emergency Plan in providing Emergency Coordinators with information to help prepare emergency plans that include people with disabilities.

## ***Acknowledgments***

A number of individuals were helpful in providing information and reviewing numerous drafts. We would like to acknowledge our technical advisors for their invaluable help, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and its document “Emergency Procedures for Employees with Disabilities in Office Occupancies.”

## ***Disclaimers***

While the members of the Emergency Response Task Force are not official experts in emergency response procedures, the members are actively committed to the civil rights of people with disabilities as embodied in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

# PREFACE

## **Purpose of an Emergency Plan**

The purpose of an Emergency Plan is to promote a safe work environment and establish a continuing state of emergency preparedness for the protection of all employees, clients and visitors, including those with disabilities, in the event of an emergency. The plan is designed to protect lives and property, preserve the organizational structure and ensure the continuity and/or early resumption of essential services.

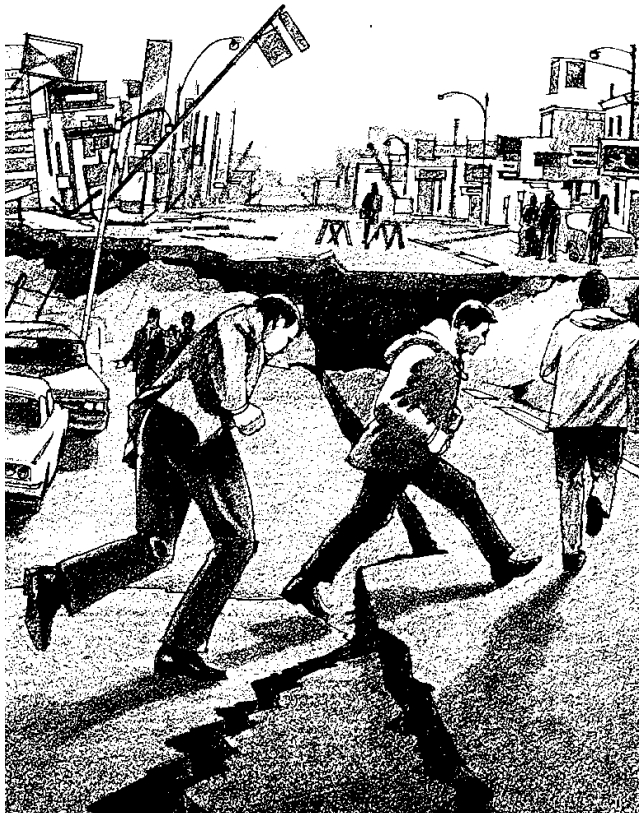
## **Americans with Disabilities Act and the Emergency Plan**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities in employment, public and private services, transportation and communications.

To achieve this intent, all public agencies are required to take measures to ensure compliance with the ADA. While the ADA does not specifically require formal emergency plans, Titles I and III do require policies and procedures be equally accessible and include people with both permanent and temporary disabilities. Since it is every Agency's responsibility to provide a safe place for all employees to work, departments must make provisions for all employees, clients and visitors during emergencies.

Awareness of emergency procedures and the inclusion of people with disabilities does not just happen; emergency plans will need to specifically address such matters. Departments must evaluate all facets of safety and emergency procedures to determine if they adequately address disability issues.

This guide for the evacuation of people with disabilities is intended to serve as a tool to facilitate their inclusion in emergency plans. Use it to help customize your Emergency Plan and perhaps modify policies, procedures and equipment in order to reach the requisite end result of safety for all employees.

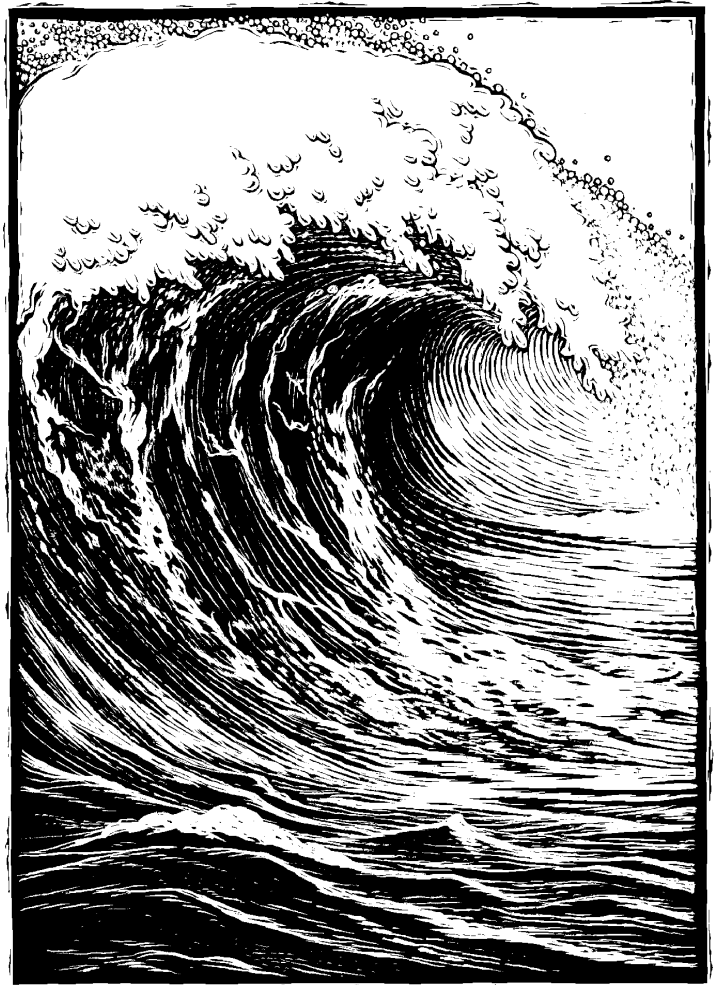


## Threat Analysis

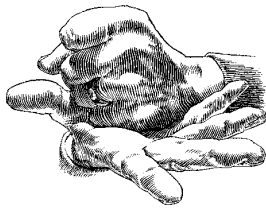
Emergency planning means looking for things that may harm people (threats), considering how often they might happen (risks), evaluating how much they might harm us (vulnerabilities), and implementing ways to reduce or prevent their impacts (controls). The individual Floor Wardens should use these techniques every day to make sure people in their building are as safe as possible. By looking ahead, wardens can identify if people might be harmed by upcoming events. These can change every day, just like the weather. There may be a higher risk from potential flooding; there may be aftershocks after a large earthquake; a nearby fire might cause a hazardous material cloud; or there may have been a series of bomb threats. An example is the building itself. Are stairwells going to be blocked for painting, or will elevators be out of service?

What should a floor warden do if threats become serious risks? The best action is prevention. The floor warden must bring potential risks to management's attention. An alert management team may consider moving the work force to another location. Today's California work force has many options, such as flex-time, telecommuting from home or a telecenter or using satellite offices. If evacuation of the work place is a possibility, it is wise to reduce the number of employees, whether or not they have a disability, in advance. Removing people from harm's way reduces vulnerability.

The effectiveness of an emergency response, whether it is a drill or not, should be measured against the above standard. It is important to have a thorough debriefing after each drill and actual emergency. Evaluate how well the threats, risks, vulnerabilities and controls were addressed and implemented. And, monitor how effectively the needs of the people with disabilities were met. A drill or actual emergency response is only successful if the needs of all employees and clientele are met.







# HELP

(American Sign Language)



# POLICY STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

SECTION

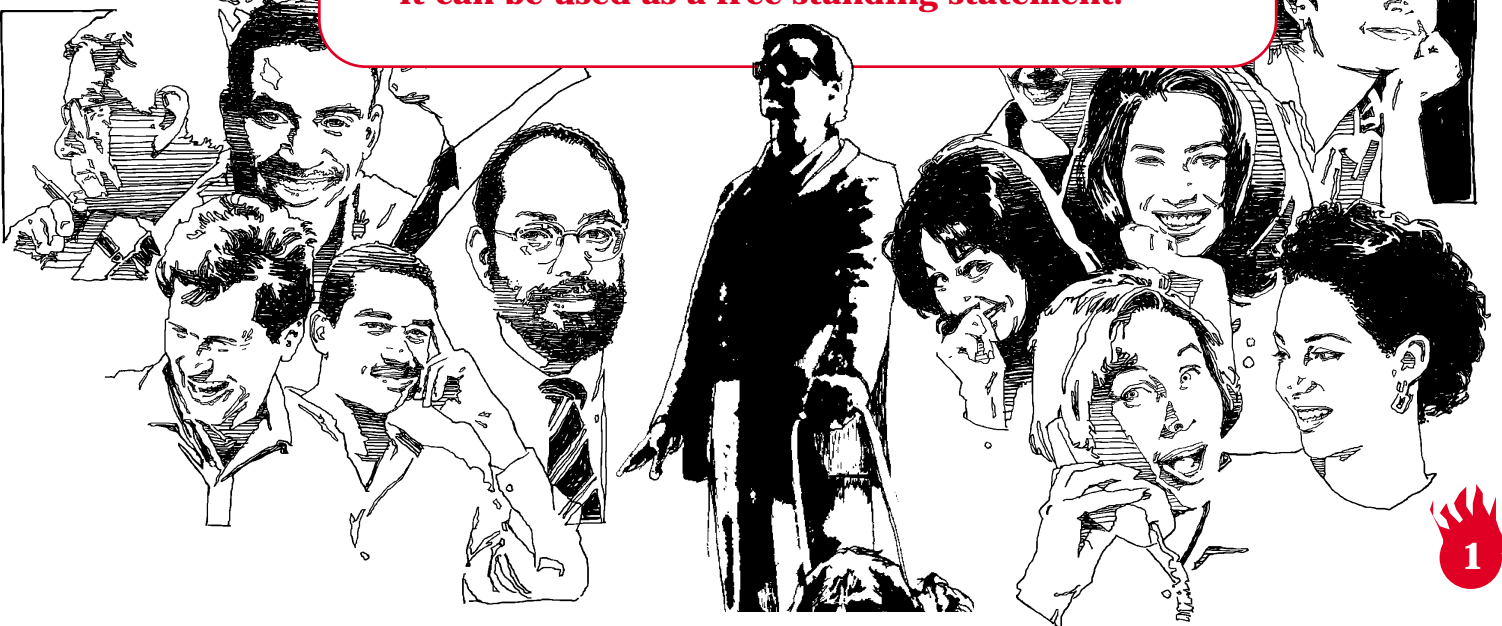
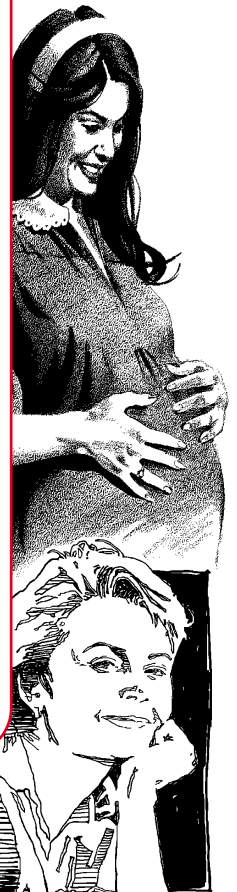
1

**Each State agency should begin to address the emergency and evacuation needs of people with disabilities by adopting a policy statement indicating the department's intent and commitment to that end.**

**The following is a suggested policy statement:**

The (Department Name) expresses its commitment to provide the same level of service and safety to all employees, clients and visitors. We have given conscious consideration and have taken deliberate action to address the diverse needs of our employees and the public we serve. This applies to policies, procedures and practices prior to, during and after an emergency. This emergency plan represents an effort to provide the same level of safety to people with disabilities as to those without a disability by providing guidance on how to assist people with disabilities during emergencies.

**This policy statement can be used as a supplement to an existing policy statement or it can be used as a free standing statement.**



## SECTION 2

# OBTAINING INPUT FROM EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

The key to developing a quality, comprehensive emergency plan is obtaining input from all who have a stake in their safety including employees with disabilities. This is the only way to learn what is needed, i.e. policies, procedures, equipment, training and emergency plan language/provisions.

When there is an Evacuation Planning Committee, assure that it includes employees with disabilities.

### TO OBTAIN INPUT

#### **WORK WITH DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND/OR DISABILITY ADVISORY REVIEW TEAM**

**Government Code Section 19795(b)** specifically requires each State department to have a Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) to serve in an advisory capacity to the director/department on disability employment issues. Emergency procedures are an appropriate subject for this committee.

Many departments established Disability Advisory Review Teams (DART) to help implement the ADA. Members are drawn from employees with disabilities, disability organizations and/or the community at large.

#### **CONSULT WITH EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES**

Employees with disabilities are the best information resource.

- Hold meetings with employees who have disabilities. Include them in planning and debriefing sessions.
- Ask employees with disabilities for comments in writing.

## TO OBTAIN INPUT

### CONSULT WITH DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL

Include the Department's Health and Safety Coordinator and the Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator.

### CONTACT LOCAL/STATE/NATIONAL DISABILITY ORGANIZATIONS

- NorCAL Center on Deafness,
- Sacramento Hearing Services Center,
- Resources for Independent Living,
- Disabled in State Service,
- National Federation of the Blind.

Some State agencies working with the members of the disability community are:

- The State Independent Living Council (SILC),
- the Department of Rehabilitation,
- Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons, et al.

These organizations can help identify problems and serve as resources for training or locating emergency adaptive equipment.

### IDENTIFY CONCERNS IMPACTING ROUTES

All employees including people with disabilities, the Disability Advisory Committee, Safety Officers and building managers are responsible for identifying issues or concerns impacting the evacuation routes, places of refuge and areas of assembly.

The Emergency Coordinator should establish an "open door" policy enabling employees to communicate their concerns.

Update the emergency plan as necessary and inform all employees of the changes.

## IDENTIFYING PEOPLE NEEDING ASSISTANCE DURING AN EMERGENCY

An essential component and major challenge in developing a comprehensive emergency plan is identifying all individuals who need assistance during an emergency.

This is not always easy to do. People using wheelchairs or those with other visible disabilities come to mind immediately. However, there are many others who will require assistance, but may not appear to have a disability. There are many people who may not even realize they need assistance. In fact, many employees do not think they have a disability, but may have a condition like asthma, heart disease or pregnancy which can reduce stamina to the point of needing help in an actual emergency.

A sample memo and form that can be used to help identify employees who need assistance follow this section. It is important to protect the confidentiality of this information. Some employees fear it will be used against them and are reluctant to come forward and ask for assistance. To accurately identify all employees who need help it is especially important to address these fears. All information must be kept confidential according to the Federal Privacy Act (P.L. 93-579) and the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Civil Code Sections 1798, et seq.).





TO IDENTIFY EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

SEND FORM FOR SELF-IDENTIFICATION

Prepare a memo to all employees and attach to a form requesting information for assistance during an emergency. (See examples located after Section 3.)

To survey new employees include the memo and form in the new employee pre-employment paperwork.

REVIEW RETURNED FORMS

Review the returned forms noting employees requesting assistance and the type of assistance requested.

VOLUNTEER EMERGENCY AIDES

Develop a list of people who are willing to assist others with disabilities during emergencies.

CONTACT PEOPLE REQUESTING ASSISTANCE

Contact each person requesting assistance and discuss the best way to provide support. It is important to consider the individual’s personal preferences, privacy and dignity when discussing assistance. If an aide is requested, ensure a person with a disability has the option of asking the department to solicit volunteers and allowing the person to choose from the volunteers or personally select and contact the two aides. See Section 4 for more detailed information regarding emergency aides.

CONTACT EMERGENCY AIDES, IF APPLICABLE

Make sure there are at least 2 emergency aides for each person. Contact requested aides to ask if they are willing to accept the responsibility.

Meet with the person requesting assistance and the emergency aides to discuss procedures and training.

TRAIN ASSISTANTS

The department and the person requesting assistance should conduct training for the aides as soon as they are recruited. The person requesting assistance will address his/her individual needs.

Some people with disabilities who have requested emergency aides will not want to be evacuated during drills and minor emergencies. See Section 8 – Emergency Drills.

## TO IDENTIFY EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

### PROCURE EQUIPMENT AS NEEDED

Follow the department's procurement policy and procedures to obtain emergency equipment as needed. State Price Schedule #2-96-99-01 (Adaptive Equipment) contains a list of vendors handling employment related equipment and services for people with disabilities. Some vendors may be able to help procure equipment for emergency evacuation, etc. The State Price Schedule is available from the Department of General Services' Procurement Division. Make sure people requesting assistance and the emergency aides know how to use the equipment.

### AREA OF REFUGE

Designate an Area of Refuge on each floor. This is a safe area with direct access to an exit. People who are unable to use the stairs may remain there temporarily while awaiting further instructions or assistance during an emergency evacuation.

Include the areas of refuge on the evacuation route maps posted on each floor.

### CONTACT EMERGENCY FLOOR WARDENS

Contact the Emergency Floor Wardens to inform them of people who have requested assistance.

### FOLLOW-UP

Maintain a list of people who have requested emergency aides, the type of assistance needed and the designated emergency aides, if applicable.

Contact people requesting assistance to make sure training is complete and equipment, if necessary, has been received and is ready for use.

Conduct an "Emergency Evacuation Information" survey annually.

**ON THE FOLLOWING  
TWO PAGES  
ARE MODEL FORMS  
THAT MAY BE USED  
AS THEY ARE,  
OR  
WITH MODIFICATIONS  
TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS**



# MODEL

State of California

Agency Name

## MEMORANDUM

Date:

To: All Employees

From:

Subject: Identifying Employees Needing Assistance During an Emergency

Currently, our Department is in the process of reviewing and updating our Emergency Plan. An essential component in a comprehensive plan is identifying all employees who may need assistance during an emergency. The need for assistance may be permanent or temporary such as when you are recovering from surgery or a broken leg. When completing this form, evaluate your situation thoroughly and honestly. You might not think you need assistance, but a heart condition, asthma or pregnancy can reduce your stamina to the point where you need assistance during an emergency. Or, your hearing loss might limit your ability to respond to an audio alarm or evacuation information.

Describe in detail the type of assistance you think you will need. **It is not necessary to give medical details.**

If you want colleagues to assist you, you can either select your own or choose from a list of volunteers the department has on file. If you choose your own, list their names and phone numbers. You should select a primary aide and a back-up as well. Make sure you select "emergency aides" who can handle their assigned tasks.

Please complete the attached form and return it to the Emergency Coordinator, \_\_\_\_\_, in Room \_\_\_\_\_. The Coordinator will contact you to discuss your request.

This information will be kept confidential according to the Federal Privacy Act (P.L. 93-579) and the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Civil Code Sections 1798, et seq.). It will be used only to provide assistance during an emergency.

It is our goal to safely and efficiently protect every employee, client and visitor during an emergency and to preserve everyone's personal dignity in the process.

**It is our responsibility to provide a safe place for you to work. However, we cannot be held liable for your safety if you do not identify your need for assistance.**

Thank you,

Signature

Attachment

# MODEL

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## EMERGENCY EVACUATION INFORMATION

(REV 8/98)

DATE

NAME

OFFICE PHONE NUMBER

DIVISION/DISTRICT AND SECTION

STREET

ROOM NUMBER

CITY

SUPERVISOR

OFFICE PHONE NUMBER

Do you need assistance during an emergency? *(Circle One)*

Yes No

If yes, describe the type of assistance you anticipate needing? Please do not give medical details.

Do you wish to choose your aides from a list of volunteers? *(Circle One)*

Yes No

If no, list the names and phone numbers of two coworkers you wish to assist you.

Do you wish to be evacuated during drills and minor emergencies? *(Circle One)*

Yes No

If you do not wish to be evacuated, go to the area of refuge during drills and minor emergencies.

The purpose of this form is to identify employees who need assistance during an emergency. The need may be permanent or temporary such as when an employee is recovering from surgery or a broken leg. Some employees might not think they have a disability, but a heart condition, asthma or pregnancy can reduce stamina to the point of needing assistance when quickly moving down stairs. Or, a person's hearing loss might limit the ability to respond to an evacuation alarm or verbal announcement.

This information will be given to the Emergency Coordinator who will contact you to discuss your request and will notify your emergency floor warden. All information will be kept confidential pursuant to the Federal Privacy Act (P.L. 93-579) and the Information Practices Act of 1977 (Civil Code Sections 1798, et seq.).

If you have any questions, please contact your emergency coordinator at \_\_\_\_\_

**Please remember: Your Agency cannot be responsible for your safety  
if you do not identify your need for assistance.**

SECTION  
4

## USE OF EMERGENCY AIDES

Emergency Aides are assigned to assist people with disabilities in an emergency. While the emergency aide system is widely accepted and used, there are some inherent problems. When setting up a system, the following potential problem areas and solutions should be considered:

POTENTIAL PROBLEM	POSSIBLE SOLUTION
<b>The emergency aide is in the building, but is absent from the customary work area:</b>	Have at least two emergency aides per person requesting assistance. Alert the floor warden about the work location of the person with a disability.
<b>The person requesting assistance is in the building, but is absent from the customary work area:</b>	<p>If the emergency aides cannot locate the person requesting assistance, they should alert the floor warden who can expand the search to other areas.</p> <p>Have a sign-out board in each unit.</p> <p>Give pagers to people requesting assistance and the emergency aides.</p>
<b>The employee requesting assistance is working late, etc. when the emergency aides are unavailable:</b>	<p>Employees requesting assistance should identify themselves to the security officer when in the building after hours.</p> <p>Employees should contact the appropriate law enforcement agency and notify them that a person needing assistance is working after normal work hours and will need assistance in case of an emergency.</p> <p>Departments can designate a sign-in area at the building's entrance for employees working after normal work hours. This should be done for the safety of all employees.</p>

**POTENTIAL PROBLEM**

**The emergency aide has left the department and a new one has not been identified:**

**The emergency aide is not acceptable to the person requesting assistance:**

**The emergency aide is inappropriate (e.g. not strong enough),**

**or**

**The aide forgets or is frightened and abandons the employee:**

**POSSIBLE SOLUTION**

Employees requesting assistance should be responsible for selecting their own aides and periodically checking on their status, or

The employee can select a replacement from the Department's list of volunteers.

The Emergency Coordinator must schedule training and follow-up to ensure it has been conducted and all people involved are comfortable with their roles.

Thorough emergency aide training will take care of most of the problems.



# SECTION 5

## ADDRESSING THE SAFETY OF CLIENTS AND VISITORS

Throughout the course of business most offices will have clients and visitors who may need assistance during an emergency. Departments are responsible for providing clients and visitors with the same level of safety protection given to all employees.

### MEETINGS

*While employees are familiar with evacuation routes from each conference room, it is possible the rooms may be used by other agencies that are unfamiliar with the emergency procedures.*

#### PLANNING

When planning a meeting, the meeting coordinator informs the department, e.g. contact person or emergency coordinator where the meeting is being held, of the approximate number of people who may need assistance during an emergency and the anticipated type of assistance needed; or

The meeting room contact person asks about the approximate number of people who may need assistance during an emergency and the anticipated type of assistance they will need.

Include a copy of the evacuation routes with each agenda.

#### INFORM CLIENTS AND VISITORS OF EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Review the building's emergency procedures at all departmental meetings and functions that include clients and visitors.

When meetings and functions are held, either:

1. Have someone from the host department make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting about the building's emergency procedures; or
2. Provide information about the building's emergency procedures to the contact person for the meeting or function for review at the beginning of the event.
3. Have someone from the host department inform clients and visitors about emergency procedures.



**MEETINGS (Continued)****CONFERENCE  
ROOMS**

Post evacuation routes in all conference rooms.

Designate conference room monitors who will check each room and direct clients and visitors.

**DURING THE  
MEETING**

Review emergency evacuation procedures at the beginning of each meeting.

**CLIENTS AND VISITORS****PROVIDING  
ASSISTANCE**

All employees should know where the areas of refuge are for people with disabilities. (See Section 3-Areas of Refuge).

Instruct employees who have a client or visitor requiring assistance to notify the Zone Monitor or Floor Warden.

Consider clients and visitors when purchasing evacuation equipment.



# SECTION 6

## EFFECTIVE WARNING SYSTEMS

**There are two important characteristics about danger warnings:**

- 1. They must be immediate, and**
- 2. They must be easily understood.**

To ensure that employees, clients and visitors are aware of the threat, use more than one type of device as a cue.

The following are suggestions for different types of warning systems, which have been found to successfully alert all employees when used in combination:

<b>WARNING SYSTEMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard fire alarms,</li> <li>• Strobe lights,</li> <li>• Bull horns,</li> <li>• Rotating lights placed high on walls,</li> <li>• Continuous flashing lights on office phones,</li> <li>• Pager signals, and</li> <li>• Release of strong odors (wintergreen).</li> </ul>
<b>OTHER WARNING SYSTEMS FOR THOSE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS</b>	<p><u>Alphanumeric visual text pagers</u> (\$110-160) offer the flexibility of sending text messages directly to deaf people giving specific information about the nature of an emergency, location and instructions.</p> <p><u>Numeric pagers</u> with a vibratory alert. A numeric pager can be used to signal an emergency with a pre-arranged numerical emergency indication code.</p> <p><u>Text displays</u> (e.g. television monitors or scrolling text signs “Silent Messenger”) located throughout the building give specific evacuation information once the alert has been given via an emergency aide, strobe light or pager.</p>

**CA Title 24 Sections 31 04(e), 6003, 6004 and 7204 list specific requirements for visual and audio alarms.**

There is also a need to inform people when it is safe to return to the building. Most emergencies will require employees to gather in a designated secure area (area of assembly). However, other emergencies such as earthquakes may require people to duck under their desks or gather in separate areas where they cannot be reached by voice or auditory signal. Remember, just reaching in and grabbing someone who may not be able to see or hear can cause harm to someone who has already been through a traumatic situation.

### **GIVING THE SAFE SIGNAL**

- Bull horns,
- Different color rotating lights,
- Flashing lights on office phones, three flashes,
- Three-ring tones on phones,
- Pager signals, three buzzes,
- Bouncing ball through the work place, and
- Release of a search dog.



## SECTION 7

# TRAINING THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Emergency response training must be accessible to all employees, including those with disabilities. Evaluate all facets of safety and emergency response training – from the classroom to evacuation drills – to ensure the emergency response team, employees and training materials/procedures address the needs of everyone requesting assistance during emergencies. Such needs include, but are not limited to:

- Relevant, effective procedures for all;
- Protection of personal dignity; and
- Shared responsibility for a successful emergency response.

Require supervisors to orient their new employees to the Emergency Plan as well as refresh their staff on emergency procedures on a regular basis.

### **SENSITIZE AND TRAIN THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE STAFF**

Train all members of the Emergency Response staff to address the diversified needs of those requesting assistance during an emergency with special attention given to avoiding stereotypes and potential inappropriate behavior.

Give emphasis to:

- Using preferred language relating to people with disabilities.
- The implementation of and follow-up for a self-identification procedure for those requesting assistance. See Section 3.
- Communication skills effective for communicating with people who are deaf, hard-of-hearing or have speech impairments.
- Interaction with employees with temporary needs for assistance, e.g. broken leg, recovery from surgery or pregnancy.
- Skill training on the use of evacuation equipment.
- The effective use of emergency aides.
- Use of warning systems or compensation for deficient warning systems (lack of warning systems for the hearing impaired).
- Use of required signs (Braille, accessible to view by people using wheelchairs, etc.)

**PROVIDE EMERGENCY  
RESPONSE TRAINING  
FOR ALL EMPLOYEES**

Training may include formal classroom-type training with training materials, videos and films. When planning training, make sure materials are available in alternative formats if requested. This includes Braille, large print, captioned videos, etc. Also include assistive services when requested.

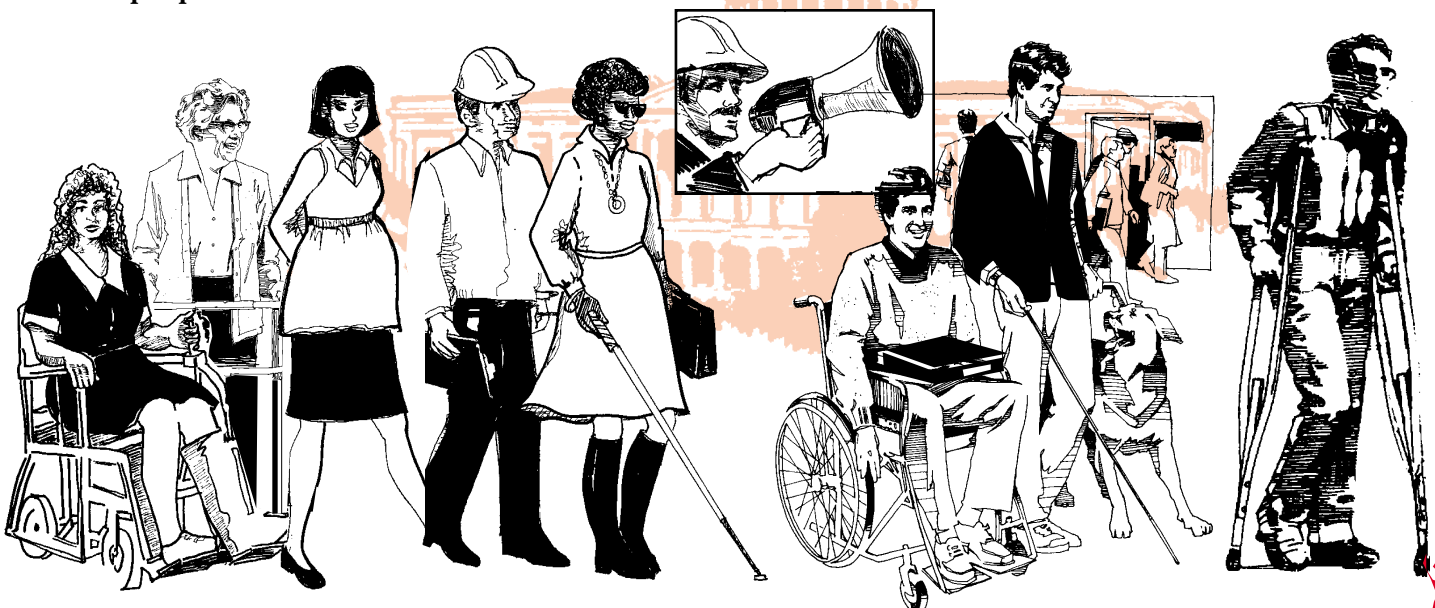
**WHERE TO OBTAIN  
HELP WHEN  
PREPARING FOR  
TRAINING  
AND DRILLS**

The following are resources when planning emergency response drills:

- The Department's Disability Advisory Committee.
- The Department's Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator.
- People with disabilities, both employees and others outside the Agency.
- The Department of Rehabilitation.
- The Governor's Committee for Employment of Disabled Persons

Capitalize on the nation's designation of October as "Disability Employment Awareness Month" to annually evaluate and promote the Department's effective and accessible Safety Program and Statewide Emergency Plan.

April is Earthquake Awareness month in California. Schedule earthquake emergency preparedness drills.



# SECTION 8

## EMERGENCY DRILLS

**Emergency drills are extremely useful to test a department's emergency plan while familiarizing occupants with the prescribed procedures, equipment, routes, etc.**

### PREPARE FOR DRILLS

Designate and train search monitors who will search all conference and meeting rooms to inform clients and visitors about the evacuation routes, assess the need for evacuation equipment and emergency assistants and arrange for such as needed.

Prominently display signs denoting emergency evacuation routes and areas of refuge. Locate them at all building entrances, outside all meeting and conference rooms and throughout the department.

### CONDUCT DRILLS

When conducting a drill, be sure all people requesting assistance, their emergency aides and all equipment are included in the drill.

**Do Not Exclude Anyone.** If the person requesting assistance is physically unable to participate in the drill, is absent or prefers to go to the area of refuge rather than be evacuated, the emergency aides should practice using the equipment with a co-worker acting as a stand-in. Make certain emergency aides who are teamed with employees with disabilities who choose not to be evacuated gain experience using the evacuation equipment.



**INCLUDE CLIENTS  
AND VISITORS**

*It is important that the emergency aides practice using the emergency equipment evacuating employees.*

Include clients and visitors in emergency drills. Points to consider are:

- Establishing a process to advise department emergency personnel of all meetings and functions occurring in the building. To the extent possible, identify clients and visitors with mobility limitations.
- Requiring clients and visitors to sign in and out.
- Asking clients and visitors to indicate on sign-in sheets whether they need assistance during emergencies.
- Providing this information to department emergency personnel regarding clients' and visitors' locations in the building.





# SECTION 9

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AWARENESS

For an emergency plan to be successful, it is necessary to inform all people, including those with disabilities, about the procedures including the routes they are to take, the areas of refuge and the areas of assembly. The CHP Model Plan provides information on routes and areas of assembly for both fair weather and inclement weather conditions.

### ENSURING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ARE AWARE OF THE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

#### EMERGENCY PLAN

Develop a marketing strategy to “sell” the emergency plan to all employees including people with disabilities:

- Conduct orientation and training sessions to increase awareness and comprehension.
- Distribute the emergency plan to all employees. Upon request, this information should be available in alternate formats, such as audio tape, computer disk, large print and Braille.
- Update and maintain the emergency plan and distribute updates to all employees. Undertake steps to ensure employees are aware of the plan and its updates.

#### EMERGENCY PLAN MAPS, EVACUATION ROUTES, AREAS OF REFUGE AND ASSEMBLY

Along with the narrative description include maps of the evacuation routes and areas of refuge and assembly in the emergency plan.

#### EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

Supervisors introduce the emergency plan, specifically discuss the emergency routes and areas of refuge and assembly and show them to new employees as part of their first day orientation. The new employee signs a supervisory new employee checklist indicating this is completed.

#### TRAIN EMERGENCY AIDES

Train the emergency aides on a regular basis.



# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

## SECTION 10



Effective communication systems are indispensable to successful emergency responses. Traditionally, audible devices have been the common alerting device. They are effective for all, except those with hearing impairments. Recently, visible devices, e.g. high-intensity flashing lights, have been used in combination with audible devices to broaden the range of notification effectiveness.

But, the need for communication goes beyond notifying people an emergency exists. Emergencies may involve evacuation and relocation to an area of refuge and/or assembly. In larger buildings, evacuation is sequenced by floors and/or work areas. Information must reach all people including those with disabilities and emergency response team members responsible for the evacuation of people with disabilities waiting in areas of refuge.

After evacuation, communication is critical in areas of assembly. Reporting the status to evacuated groups, requesting first aid and/or assistive equipment, receiving and disseminating instructions, etc., underscore the need for effective communication systems.

The following are communication devices and formats to consider so all employees, including people with disabilities, are reached by emergency communication systems.

# SECTION 10

## EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

### NOTIFICATION

See Section 6 – Effective Warning Systems

### IDENTIFY EVACUATION ROUTES

Identify paths of travel so people can follow the evacuation route.

### LIGHTING

- Make high intensity flashlights available to people with low vision; and give flashlights to those with hearing impairments who use the light to see faces and read lips. Verify that reflective strips at steps and at the bottom of exit doors are intact and continue to reflect.
- Paint emergency evacuation doors a different color from other doors in the corridor.
- If glow-in-the-dark material is used, verify it glows long enough for an evacuation to take place.

### SIGNAGE

- Place the location of evacuation information at building entrances. Have it available in alternative formats.
- Ensure exit doors and doors at stairwells have Braille and 4" tactile numbers stating floor numbers and 2" tactile letters indicating roof access. Consider placing the caduceus symbol (see glossary) near those elevators that are large enough to accommodate an unfolded gurney.

# EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

## SECTION 10

### **AREAS OF REFUGE**

Communication systems in the area of refuge:

- Use walkie-talkies with large buttons and rocker switches.
- Designate emergency response team monitors for the areas of refuge.
- Use flashlights, paper and pencils.
- Provide combination TTY and voice phones that are:
  - Accessible to people using wheelchairs,
  - Hearing aid compatible,
  - Equipped with volume amplifiers, and
  - Installed at an accessible height.

Test system to make sure it works in each area of refuge.

### **AREAS OF ASSEMBLY**

Communication systems in the area of assembly:

- Assign trained individuals to be leaders in areas of assembly.
- Announce instructions both orally and visually:
  - Bullhorn, and
  - Text display via black/whiteboard or chart paper and markers. Arrange for interpreting services if possible.
- Use equipment that may be operated by people with any disability.
- Use walkie-talkies with large buttons and rocker switches.
- Investigate using cell phones and/or other communication equipment.

# SECTION 11

## EVACUATION AND ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

As departments address the varied needs of their employees, clients and visitors with disabilities, they will be collaborating with employees with disabilities on a wide variety of issues. One of these issues is the purchase and use of specialized equipment, i.e. emergency evacuation and adaptive mobility equipment.

This purchase and use includes:

1. The selection of evacuation and adaptive mobility equipment for use in emergencies,
2. Designating personnel to operate the equipment, and
3. Training on the use of this equipment.



## SELECTING EMERGENCY EVACUATION EQUIPMENT

*The purpose of this equipment is to assist employees, clients and visitors with mobility limitations and other employees who may need assistance to evacuate the building.*

### EXAMPLES OF EQUIPMENT

- Powered, e.g. brands such as Garaventia
- Single Operator stair climber, non-powered, e.g. Garaventia
- Rigid frame and seat, carried by 2-3 people, e.g. Columbia
- Rigid frame and sling fabric seat, carried by 2-3 people
- Basic manual wheel chair carried by 2-3 people. It may be used as evacuation equipment and then by the person as adaptive mobility equipment in the area of assembly.

### WHICH TO SELECT

When considering the purchase of emergency evacuation equipment, departments should consider:

- The department's and employees' needs;
- A variety of equipment may better meet the physical needs of employees with disabilities; and
- Number of floors, availability of people to carry, projected number of people with mobility disabilities.

### HOW MANY TO BUY

Consider the number of employees with mobility disabilities who request assistance (See Section 3).

Estimate the number of clients and visitors needing assistance who may be in the building.

### WHERE TO STORE THE EMERGENCY EVACUATION EQUIPMENT

If the equipment is purchased for a specific employee, it should be placed in close proximity to that person's usual work area. Place extra equipment at various locations on each floor and near areas that might be occupied by other people with disabilities, e.g. meeting, conference and training rooms and auditoriums.

# SECTION 11

## EVACUATION AND ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

### ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

- *Provides mobility for people who have been separated from their own adaptive mobility equipment,*
- *Provides mobility for people who do not usually use adaptive mobility equipment, but due to the emergency need the aid of such equipment; and*
- *In some situations, serves as both emergency evacuation and adaptive mobility equipment.*

#### EXAMPLES OF ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

- Wheelchairs – basic manual foldable chairs with removable arms and removable and/or folding foot plates;
- Foam wheelchair cushions;
- Crutches – underarm and Canadian, length adjustable;
- Canes – regular, tri-pod and blind mobility. Check length adjustability; and
- Walkers – Check on height/weight range, foldability, wheels and weight of device.
- Adjustable safety belt/strap.

#### WHICH TO SELECT

When considering the purchase of adaptive mobility equipment, consider the needs of both the department and the employees.

#### HOW MANY TO BUY

Determine number of items based on number of:

- Employees with mobility disabilities who request assistance, (See Section 3);
- Other employees who may need such assistance during an emergency; and
- Client or visitor count in building at any given time.

#### WHERE TO STORE THE ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

Store in an easily accessible area:

- Storage room near entrance/exit,
- Storage area in adjacent building,
- In office of employee with disability (still need to address equipment for clients/visitors),
- Disburse on each floor; and/or
- Single storage area on the first floor.

## DESIGNATING PERSONNEL TO OPERATE/BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

### EVACUATION EQUIPMENT

Determine how many people are necessary to operate each evacuation device.

Include them as emergency aides on the Emergency Response Team and assign them to:

1. A floor or specific area to help employees, clients and visitors with disabilities;
2. Assist particular employees with disabilities (See Section 3); or
3. A floor or area to assist clients and visitors while others are assigned to particular employees with disabilities.

*(The second and third approaches are preferable.)*

### ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT

Designate members of the Emergency Team, probably the emergency aides, to be responsible for distributing the mobility equipment after the evacuation.

## TRAINING ON THE USE OF THE ABOVE EQUIPMENT

### TRAINING

Orient all departmental emergency team members on the function, use and location of all of the equipment.

On a regular basis, conduct practice sessions and drills so that emergency team members and emergency aides gain experience using the emergency equipment and have an opportunity to evacuate a person with a disability.

Use employees with disabilities in practice sessions and drills so they will become familiar with the equipment and the evacuation process.

Refer to the Section 7 for additional considerations.



## SECTION 12

# LOSS OF ADAPTIVE MOBILITY EQUIPMENT DURING EVACUATION

During an emergency or evacuation, employees, clients or visitors with a disability may be separated from their adaptive mobility equipment (e.g. power wheel chair, scooter, manual wheel chair, walkers, crutches or cane). Reasons for this separation include:

- The weight of the device (making evacuation with its owner difficult);
- Non-availability of an elevator;
- The use of evacuation equipment;
- The person is carried out of the building; or
- The item is in another area that is not safe to enter, or there is not time to retrieve it.

The end result is the person with the disability is evacuated to the designated assembly area without the mobility equipment. For some individuals, the effect on their mobility is minimal. For others, the non-availability of their mobility equipment means they are completely immobile. It may be necessary to place the individuals on the ground. Also, some mobility equipment may provide support, stability and protection; enhance upper extremity function and communication capability; provide pulmonary function; ensure personal dignity, etc. Some people with disabilities can suffer permanent injuries if placed on the ground or are otherwise separated from their mobility equipment and/or assistive devices. Further, replacement may take months if the equipment is customized.

Each department must devise ways to address this issue. The following suggestions should not be seen as mutually exclusive; rather the most effective approach will probably include a mix of all three. See Section 11 for more information.

**EVACUATE MOBILITY  
EQUIPMENT WITH USER**

If possible, devise a departmental evacuation procedure to maximize the evacuation of mobility equipment with its user.

**EVACUATE “CHAIRS”**

Use evacuation “chairs” to provide the evacuee with some measure of mobility. See Section 11.

**EMERGENCY ADAPTIVE  
MOBILITY EQUIPMENT**

Purchase and use emergency adaptive equipment: See Section 11.

**ADDITIONAL  
CONSIDERATIONS**

When the mobility equipment has attachments (e.g. oxygen, communication device, etc.), but evacuation of that equipment is not feasible, consider evacuating the key attachment. For example, during evacuation use a light weight wheelchair and the oxygen from the wheelchair the person with a disability usually uses.



# SECTION 13

## LOCATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

There are practical matters to address to ensure not only that evacuation is orderly and systematic, but also that the key issue of “lifesaving” all people including people with disabilities is not lost. Preparation is the key; then application. Importantly, the CHP Evacuation Plan states evacuation of people with disabilities will be given the highest priority in all emergencies. They will be evacuated by the most expeditious and safe means available. (HPH 100.3.)

### **PRIOR TO AN EVACUATION**

The Emergency Coordinator works with the emergency aides to identify all employees, clients and visitors who may need assistance during an emergency and the type of assistance requested. See Section 3.

Determine which people with disabilities want to be evacuated to the area of refuge during drills and minor emergencies rather than being evacuated to the area of assembly. See Section 3.

Conduct Emergency Aide refresher training at regular intervals. See Section 7.

### **DURING AN EVACUATION**

The emergency aides alert the Floor Warden of the number of people needing evacuation assistance and the type of assistance needed. Note: This may include employees, clients and visitors who do not usually have mobility limitations, but may need assistance during an emergency.

The Floor Warden and the emergency aides collaborate to provide assistance as needed.

The Floor Wardens notify the Emergency Coordinator.

Reference to CHP Model Plan: Reference is made to (Command Center), (The Floor Wardens) and (Emergency Assistants and Messengers).

# EMERGENCIES OUTSIDE NORMAL WORK HOURS

## SECTION 14

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) “most office fire fatalities occur outside of normal working hours.” Therefore, it is critical for each department to develop emergency provisions for all employees including people with disabilities who may be working outside normal working hours.

### IF OFFICE SECURITY IS ON DUTY

The employee checks in with security personnel when entering the building.

### IF NO OFFICE SECURITY IS ON DUTY

- Call the appropriate law enforcement agency using their local non-emergency phone number to:
- Alert them someone is working in the building,
  - Give an estimated working time and room number,
  - State if assistance will be needed during an emergency and type of assistance needed, and
  - Call before leaving the office.
- Or
- Consider establishing an Interagency Agreement with another State agency or organization to provide assistance.
- Have a sign in sheet by door requesting name, check-in time, room number and check-out time.



PLEASE SIGN IN			
Name /Phone	Check in time	Room Number	Check out time

# SECTION 15

## PROCEDURES AT DESIGNATED AREA OF ASSEMBLY

**AVOID PANIC!** Once at the area of assembly it is important to ensure order and to periodically provide people with information regarding the status of the emergency.

### EMERGENCY TEAM

Train and drill on how to maintain order. Note: There may be “stragglers” or people who will not go to the correct area.

Establish a line of communication between the command center and the designated area of assembly. See Section 10.

It is possible some people may not know where the area of assembly is located. Include this information in the emergency plan.

### AT THE AREA OF ASSEMBLY

Emergency aides continue to act in their capacity as needed.

Announce instructions both orally and visually.

- Bullhorns serve most (but not all) people.
- Black/white board or chart paper and markers make information available to those with hearing loss.
- Prearrange for interpreters where appropriate.
- Use walkie-talkies/cell phones to call for first aid.
- Additional communication information is in Section 10.

Consider the safety, comfort and personal dignity of people with disabilities and those who receive injuries during the emergency.

This includes:

- Providing assistance in a respectful fashion, e.g. asking first;
- Checking with employees, clients and visitors who have disabilities or those who may be medically affected by the emergency regarding their needs;
- Locating and providing seating for people who have difficulty standing;
- Finding adaptive mobility equipment (see Section 11) for people with disabilities who were evacuated without their own mobility equipment so they are not left lying on the ground;
- Assisting with other needs, e.g. location of accessible restrooms, and water for taking medications, oxygen, etc.

# RETURN TO WORK SITE

## SECTION 16

**Once the emergency is over and the emergency team has been told to return to work:**

### **IF RETURNING TO ORIGINAL WORK SITE**

People with disabilities who used their own equipment during the evacuation will be able to use this equipment to return to work.

Those who were separated from their own equipment may prefer using the emergency adaptive mobility equipment to return to work.

Others may want to use their own equipment. Request emergency aides to retrieve personal equipment when desired.

### **IF RELOCATING TO AN ALTERNATE WORK SITE**

Address the individualized needs of people with disabilities in the Departmental Operational Recovery Plan.



### **Reference to CHP Model Plan:**

- Plan Review and Update;
- The Facility or Work Site Emergency Team;
- Disabled Persons Monitor;
- Messengers;
- Announce Return.

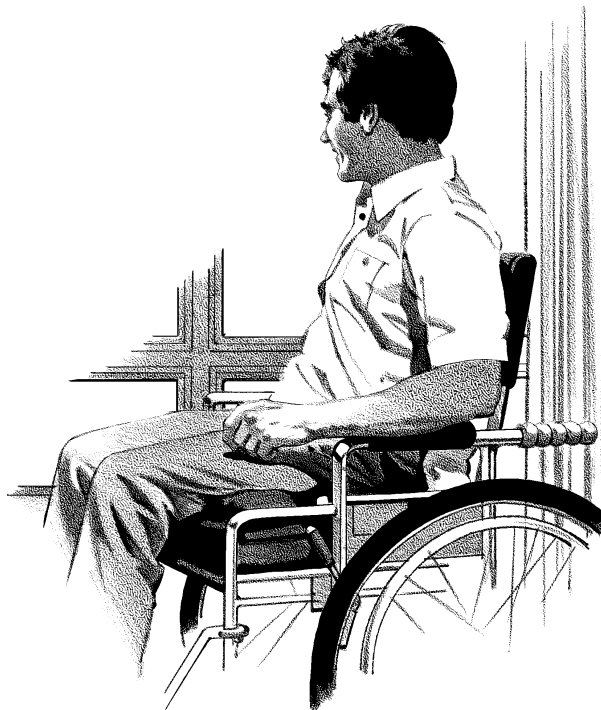


# SECTION 17

## ROLE OF SECURITY GUARDS

Employees, clients and visitors – with or without disabilities – automatically look to security guards whenever emergencies occur. Their uniforms and assigned locations contribute to such an assumption. Yet, the role they are to play in an emergency situation is often unclear or unknown to the employees, clients and visitors, and perhaps even the security guards themselves.

The relationship between the security guards and the individual department may vary depending on the nature of the contractual agreement. To avoid confusion and wasting time during an emergency, the Department should address this situation and make the role of the security guard clear to everyone.



## **DETERMINE SECURITY GUARDS' ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES DURING AN EMERGENCY**

Recommended actions include:

- Clearly define and clarify their role.
- Include disability awareness training.
- Meet to consider and decide what role they will play in emergencies.
- Include their role in the emergency plan.
- Publicize their role, e.g. “For emergency assistance, go to the security guard station.”

### **The following is information for agencies negotiating security guard contracts:**

When negotiating a security guard contract, consider including the following responsibilities:

- Calling 911, etc.
- Knowledge of paths of travel when the elevators are not available.
- Opening emergency doors.
- Knowledge of the location of emergency equipment.
- Directing employees, clients and visitors through the building.
- Helping emergency response personnel locate proper equipment.
- How to assist with evacuations – list specific examples.
- Working with the emergency response team.
- Location of Command Center.
- Requiring visitors and clients to sign in and out.
- Asking visitors and clients to indicate on sign-in sheets that they need assistance during emergencies.
- Providing information to the department's emergency personnel regarding visitors' and clients' locations in the building.

Develop the Security Guards' duty statement to reflect the Department's needs if applicable.

**Hold debriefing sessions after every emergency and drill in an effort to continually improve the emergency plan.**

## AFTER THE EMERGENCY OR DRILL

- 1.** The Floor Wardens and the Emergency Coordinator meet to assess how well the emergency aides performed their duties during the evacuation.
- 2.** While maintaining confidentiality of all the people involved, write and give the results of the evaluations of the performance to the Emergency Team Members to continually improve the evacuation process.
- 3.** Provide a written report that can be used to improve training.
- 4.** Share information with the Disability Advisory Committee for input and comments for the emergency preparedness training sessions.



# GLOSSARY

## A

### **Accessibility**

The ability of all people including those with disabilities to approach, enter and use facilities; participate in programs, services and activities; and be included in the communication therein.

### **ADA**

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990

### **ADAAG**

Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

### **Adaptive Mobility Equipment**

Provides mobility for people with disabilities who have been separated from their own equipment during an emergency; also for people who do not ordinarily use such equipment, but due to the stress of the emergency, now need such equipment.

### **Aphasia**

Absence or impairment of the ability to communicate through speech, writing or signs.

### **Area of Assembly**

A designated safe area away from the emergency where employees, clients and visitors will gather after an evacuation.

### **Area of Refuge/Area of Rescue**

An area that has direct access to an exit, where people who are unable to use stairs may remain temporarily in safety to await further instructions or assistance during emergency evacuation.

### **Artificial Barrier**

Any non job-related employment consideration which excludes from consideration for employment individuals otherwise capable of doing the work.

## B

### **Blind/Blindness**

Vision impairments ranging from the inability to distinguish light and dark to a loss of part of the visual field or the inability to see detail (see definition, Visually Impaired).

### **Braille**

“Perkins Braille” is an all-purpose Braille writer.

### **Buddy System**

Preferred Language. See Emergency Aides

## C

### **Caduceus Symbol**

Insignia used as the symbol of the medical profession.



### **Cane**

As used by the person who is blind, the cane is a natural extension of the arm and hand and is used as an “information gathering” device (to locate familiar landmarks) for the purpose of establishing a clear path of travel. With the conventional low-point touch system the cane is moved from side to side in an arcing motion.

### **Closed Circuit TV Magnifier (CCTV)**

Consists of television camera which takes a picture of the printed page and a television monitor displaying the image in enlarged form.

## **D**

### **DAC – Disability Advisory Committee**

Established by CA Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity to the director/department on disability employment issues (Gov't Code Section 19795b).

### **DART – Disability Advisory Review Team**

A group of individuals specifically designated by a department (may be the DAC, see above) to assist with the ADA Self-Evaluation, Transition Plan and implementation.

### **Deaf/Deafness**

Range of auditory limitation, from a total lack of sensitivity to sound to reduced sensitivity to certain sound frequencies. The term Deaf also describes a separate cultural group, which shares a common language (American Sign Language), experiences and values.

### **Developmental Disabilities**

People who meet the legal definition have been identified as developmentally disabled. This includes autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mental retardation and other neurological impairments.

### **Disability**

A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

### **Discouraged Language**

Terminology that is unacceptable and/or insulting to some others with disabilities. (See Preferred Language List)

## **E**

### **Emergency Aides**

Those assigned to assist people with disabilities during an emergency.

### **Emergency Evacuation Equipment**

Equipment used to assist employees, clients and visitors with mobility limitations and other employees who may need similar assistance.

## **F**

### **Fingerspelling**

When no sign language exists for a spoken word or concept, the information can be spelled out using the American Manual Alphabet.

### **Floor Wardens**

Term used to identify an assignment made in the Emergency Plan. People are assigned as coordinators of emergency actions by occupants of a single floor.

## **H**

### **Handicapped**

Derived from cap-in-hand for begging. Its use is discouraged. See Preferred Language List.

### **Hearing Impaired**

Scale of hearing impairment ranges from mild hearing loss to profound deafness, the point at which the

individual receives no benefit from aural input. Many hard-of-hearing people are able to use residual hearing effectively with the assistance of hearing aids or other sound amplification equipment, often augmented by lip reading. Hearing aids amplify background noises as well as voices; so, noise caused by emergency conditions (alarm bells, people shouting, sirens, etc.) can cause discomfort and further damage hearing ability.

## I

### **Interpreter**

Professionals who provide communication access for deaf, speech/hearing impaired and hearing consumers.

## L

### **Learning Disability**

An individual who may have difficulty recognizing or being motivated to act in an emergency. These individuals may also have difficulty in following anything other than a few simple instructions.

### **Low level Signage/Floor Proximity Exit Signs**

Usually placed between 6" to 8" above the floor. A supplement to the required exit sign. The required exit signs are usually located over the exits or near the ceiling, the first place to become obscured by smoke.

## M

### **Means of Evacuation**

An accessible means of evacuation is one that complies with the following guidelines: a continuous and unobstructed way of exit travel from any point in a building or facility to a public way. A means of evacuation comprises vertical and horizontal travel and may include intervening room spaces, doorways, corridors, passageways, balconies, ramps, stairs, enclosures, lobbies, horizontal exits, courts and yards. Areas of refuge or evacuation elevators MAY BE included as part of accessible means of evacuation.

(Contact the authority having jurisdiction or refer to the building codes for the local applications or definition.)

### **Mobility Impaired**

People with mobility impairments can vary in the degree of assistance they require. The degree of impairment ranges from walking with a slow gait to walking with mobility aids such as a cane or crutches or using wheelchairs.

### **Monitors**

Term used to identify the different assignments made in the Emergency Plan. The duties of the Monitor could include assisting with the evacuation of a specific floor or unit, identifying people with disabilities who require assistance, and coordinating the assignment of emergency aides.

## N

### **Normal**

See Preferred Language



## O

### **Optical Character Reader**

Device that can be scanned over a printed page, reading the text aloud through a voice synthesis system. This may also have a provision for reading directly from a computer disk containing a word processor file.

### **Opticon**

Device enabling a blind person to “read.” It consists of a camera that converts print into an image of letters that are then produced via vibrations onto the finger.

## P

### **Physically Disabled**

Any individual who has a physical disability which constitutes or results in a substantial barrier to employment.

### **Preferred Language**

See Preferred Language List located at the end of this section.

## R

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

Alterations, adjustments or changes in the job, the workplace and/or term or condition of employment which enable a qualified person with a disability to perform a particular job successfully, as determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the individual circumstances.

## S

### **Service Animal**

An animal, usually a dog, trained to provide assistance to a person who is blind, deaf or mobility impaired. The animal can be identified by the presence of a harness or backpack.

### **Sign Language**

(American) Sign Language is a visual language, distinct from English, created and used by most people who are deaf. Some people with hearing/speech impairments may use this language as well.

### **Speech Disorder**

Limited or difficult speech patterns or without speech.

## T

### **Tactile Signage**

Signs or labels with Braille, raised letters or textured patterns that people with visual impairments can recognize by touch.

### **Text Typewriter (TTY) (Formerly TDD)**

Equipment employing interactive graphic communications through transmission of electronic signals across the standard telephone network.

## V

### **Victim**

See Preferred Language

### **Visually Impaired**

A person with a vision impairment may be totally or legally blind. Legally blind people may be able to differentiate between light and dark or see very large objects, but may not be able to see anything clearly enough to depend on their vision in an emergency situation. This can also include people with LOW VISION who can see well enough to walk without assistance, but cannot read without magnification.

# PREFERRED LANGUAGE

People with disabilities are members of a minority community that comprises over 20 percent of the U.S. population. Recognizing that personhood comes first and that we are different, disability or not, we need to emphasize the person first and the disability second. Let our descriptive words emphasize the person's worth and abilities, not the disabling condition.

As empowered by the ADA, the disability community is seeking to develop new and more suitable terminology about itself. The terms in the left-hand column are preferred and should be used. The terms in the right-hand column are discouraged; many members of the disability community view them as outdated and offensive. Please note, this is not an all-inclusive or unchanging list. We do not presume to speak for each individual in the disability community. This list will evolve as the needs of the disability community become more defined.

## EXPRESSIONS

### **PREFERRED**

Employees and customers  
with disabilities

Teacher with mobility impairment,  
who uses a wheelchair

College seniors with disabilities

Participants including individuals  
who had either cerebral palsy,  
a mental disability or a  
hearing impairment

### **DISCOURAGED**

Handicapped employees and  
customers

Crippled teacher confined  
to a wheelchair

Afflicted college seniors

Disabled participants

## DESCRIPTIVE WORDS

### **PREFERRED**

Without a disability  
Person with a disability  
Person with Multiple Sclerosis  
Person with arthritis  
Person with cerebral palsy  
Person using a wheelchair  
Person who has a  
mobility impairment  
Person who is deaf  
Person who is deaf and  
is unable to speak  
Person who is deaf and  
is unable to speak  
Person with a disability  
Emergency Aide  
Person with a disability  
Person with a (name disease)  
Person with Epilepsy  
Mobility impaired  
People with disabilities  
Non-disabled or without disabilities  
People with disabilities  
Person with a disability  
Person who is mentally or  
emotionally impaired  
Person who is  
visually impaired; blind  
Person who is  
developmentally disabled  
Person with seizures  
Person with a disability  
Person with a disability  
Person using a wheelchair

### **DISCOURAGED**

Able-bodied  
Afflicted  
Afflicted by MS  
An arthritic  
Cerebral Palsied; CP victim  
Confined to a wheelchair  
Crippled  
Deaf; burdened by deafness  
Deaf and Dumb  
Deaf mute  
Deformed  
Disabled Person's Monitor  
Disabled Person  
Diseased  
Epileptic  
Gimp  
The Handicapped  
Normal  
Physically challenged  
Poor unfortunate  
Retard, retardate or retarded  
Sightless  
Spastic; "spaz"  
Suffers fits  
Unfortunate  
Victim  
Wheelchair bound

